

**INQUIRY INTO CLOSURE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW  
SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially Confidential

## To whom it may Concern.

This is my story about the closure of Murrami Public School.

I was the School Admin Manager at that school for 14 years. Over that time the school had two really good Principals who were there for the school, students and the community.

Then when they left a relieving Principal was put in for 12 months (and this female teacher as far as I was made aware) was put in for the 12 months because [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. In 2013 a Principal was made permanent at Murrami, then I could see things slowly decline. He was put into Murrami school as the Dept had to find him a school as his school was closed (Bilbul) and he was running out of time and could have been sent away to another school that had a vacancy. And he would have had to accept it anywhere in NSW.

Sometimes in small communities you find that there are a few low socio economic families and that started happening at Murrami, at one stage it was mainly a school with mostly farming families and a few students from the village. The Principal and school community found 2013 to be a very hard year with all changes being made with the Principal having different ideas about how he wanted to run the school.

2014 came and it started off reasonably well, but at the end of September that's when it all fell apart.

On a Monday in September 2014 the Principal called all staff to a meeting and told us that the school will be closing at the end of December 2014 and will be amalgamating with another small school. They said it was not economical to keep the school open when there was another school not far away, that Murrami School could amalgamate with. Murrami School still would have had 19 to 20 kids at the school on 2015. Whitton School was about 20kms away in the direction of Griffith not Leeton which is Murrami schools closest business centre. We were not allowed to say anything and a meeting was called 2 days later to let all school parents know what was going to happen. There was total disregard and disrespect for the staff and school community and for the wellbeing of the school students.

As you can imagine everyone were in shock as the school played a very major part of this small farming community. Murrami Public School had a very good reputation around the whole of the MIA area their school grounds were one of the very most well maintained as far as schools went.

The school only had 3 months to digest that the school was closing and merging with Whitton School which would allow them to have about 39 students combined. At the first meeting with Principal, staff, parents and a Representative from Griffith District Office the question was asked from a parent, "what can we do to fix this" the answer from the Principal and the Dep Education Rep was "nothing can be done, its going through and that's final" From my understanding the Principal and a school family and Mr Piccoli who were all good friends had been having secret meetings through the year on merging the two schools. I have to add the Relieving Principal from the other school Whitton Public School was doing a great job trying the stabilise the school community after a very turbulent 2 years of another Principal who could not earn the respect from the community and the school lost about half of their school students.

My understanding is that the Principal from Murrami did not want to be a full time teacher and saw an opportunity to close one school and amalgamate with another that had better buildings, resources, the town had a swimming pool and a shop. Murrami did not have any of these it only had a Post Office. But the school and community were very close.

The towns people are still trying to get the school reopened, but my only concern is that it is now closed and everything has been taken away from that school and once you close a school it never reopens. If there was the proper consultation and the time for the community to absorb this and better communication instead of all of the secrecy the closure and amalgamation may have progressed with in a much happier outcome.

My other concern is why was the Murrami Principal allowed to use all the funds in the bank account from Murrami School and use it for his amalgamated school Whitton when Whitton School had a very healthy bank account.

Now Whitton has a very well resourced, extremely well furnished and a very smart looking school because they were able to use double the money than the other small schools. If anything that money should have been returned the Dept Education and used where it was deemed necessary, we are always hearing that schools need more funding.

Since this happened at Murrami School, Wamoon Public School and Yanco Public School have been struggling to keep their numbers. Both schools used to take in students from bigger schools in the Leeton area who were looking for the small school experience but now they don't get any requests as everyone seem to think the two small schools will be closed very shortly.

If a school is to be closed the proper consultation should be extended to the staff and school community and be given more than 3 months notice. It should be done very passionately and the school be given every opportunity to state why the school should be allowed to continue as a small school. I don't understand how Mr Adrian Piccoli just seems to pick a school and that's it, school to be closed.

5 August 2015